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Intelligence Information Cable

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**SECRET**

DIST 31 OCTOBER 1972

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 26 OCTOBER 1972 AND AS STATED

SUBJECT COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF OF LAI THIEU DISTRICT, BINH DUONG PROVINCE, ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE DISTRICT AND ON HIS PREPARATIONS FOR THE IMPENDING POLITICAL STRUGGLE

ACQ VIETNAM, BIEN HOA (28 OCTOBER 1972) FIELD NO.

1. AS OF 26 OCTOBER 1972 THE TACTICAL SITUATION IN LAI THIEU DISTRICT OF BINH DUONG PROVINCE REMAINED CALM, ACCORDING

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TO THE DISTRICT CHIEF, LIEUTENANT COLONEL VO CONG T R I. THERE WAS STILL A SUBSTANTIAL ENEMY FORCE IN AND AROUND AN SON VILLAGE, BUT IT WAS AVOIDING CONTACT WITH THE VIETNAMESE ARMY (ARVN) RANGER GROUP ASSIGNED TO CLEAR THE AREA OF VIET CONG (VC)/NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) UNITS. BOTH THE ARVN 65TH AND 73RD RANGER BATTALIONS HAD MADE ONLY MINIMAL CONTACT WITH THE VC/NVA UNITS, WHICH WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE DIVIDED INTO SMALL GROUPS TO AVOID DETECTION.

2. COLONEL TRI SAID THAT THE VC KI DONG NAI BATTALION WAS BEING SUPPORTED BY THE C63 LOCAL FORCE UNIT AND THAT INFILTRATION GROUPS WERE CONTINUING TO CROSS NEW ROUTE 13 CARRYING SUPPLIES INTO THE AN SON AREA. HOWEVER, TRI BELIEVES THAT THE K2 DONG NAI BATTALION, WHICH IS LOCATED IN THE BINH HOA VILLAGE AREA, IS SUFFERING AN INCREASING SHORTAGE OF FOODSTUFFS. A REGIONAL FORCES (RF) PLATOON SPOTTED A 40-MAN GROUP FROM THE K2 BATTALION DIGGING ROOTS TO EAT IN THE BINH HOA AREA ON 25 OCTOBER. THE RF PLATOON CALLED IN ARTILLERY FIRE ON THE UNIT AND THE NEXT MORNING THREE BODIES WERE RECOVERED, BRINGING THE TOTAL CONFIRMED ENEMY KILLED FROM THIS BATTALION TO 34. WHILE THE EXACT STRENGTH OF THE K2 BATTALION IS NOT KNOWN, IT IS ESTIMATED

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TO BE BETWEEN 100 AND 150 MEN.

3. COLONEL TRI HAD NO INFORMATION ON THE INTENTIONS OF THE

ENEMY FORCES IN HIS DISTRICT, BUT HE BELIEVES THAT THEY MAY BE STAYING IN THE AREA UNTIL JUST BEFORE A CEASE-FIRE, AT WHICH TIME THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO TAKE AND HOLD AS MANY VILLAGES AND HAMLETS AS POSSIBLE. THEY MAY ALSO ATTEMPT TO CUT OLD ROUTE 13 BETWEEN LAI THIEU DISTRICT TOWN AND THE PROVINCE CAPITAL, PHU CUONG. TRI STATED THAT THE ONLY EFFECTIVE WAY TO COUNTER SUCH ACTIVITY IS TO STATION A SMALL SQUAD-SIZED GROUP OF HIS TERRITORIAL FORCES IN EVERY VILLAGE AND HAMLET. HOWEVER, THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT TERRITORIAL FORCES IN LAI THIEU DISTRICT EVEN TO COVER COME OF THE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENEMY TARGETS,

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FOR EXAMPLE, MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS, BRIDGES, AND HAMLETS AND VILLAGES AT MAIN ROAD INTERSECTIONS. IF ENEMY UNITS ATTACK AND ATTEMPT TO HOLD ANY OF THESE TARGETS, COLONEL TRI BELIEVES HE WILL BE ABLE TO OUST THEM IN TWO TO THREE DAYS AT THE MOST. WHILE SOME ENEMY UNITS HAVE MOVED SOUTH FROM LAI THIEU ON THREE TRAILS WHICH HAVE BEEN RECENTLY DISCOVERED, TRI BELIEVES THAT THESE HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY SMALL UNITS AND THAT TRAILS AND TRACKS INDICATE THAT MORE ENEMY TROOPS HAVE ENTERED THE DISTRICT THAN HAVE LEFT IT DURING THE PAST TEN DAYS. A NEW TRAIL WAS DISCOVERED ON 24 OCTOBER WHICH LED FROM THE SAIGON RIVER TO THE AN SON AREA. TRI SPECULATED THAT THE NUMBER OF TROOPS COMING DOWN THIS TRAIL COULD EXCEED 100.

4. IN ORDER TO COUNTER ANY FUTURE ENEMY ATTEMPTS TO RAISE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NLF) FLAGS IN LAI THIEU DISTRICT, TRI HAS GIVEN ORDERS TO VILLAGE AND HAMLET OFFICIALS TO KEEP EXTRA GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) FLAGS HIDDEN IN ADDITION TO THE ONES THEY ARE CURRENTLY REQUIRED TO FLY. WHILE HE IS NOT CERTAIN THAT ALL OF THE OFFICIALS WOULD RAISE A SECOND FLAG IN THE EVENT THE FIRST ONE IS PULLED DOWN BY THE VC, TRI BELIEVES THAT AT LEAST 50 PERCENT OF THEM WILL DO SO. TRI STATED THAT ALTHOUGH

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HE WAS ORDERED BY THE PROVINCE CHIEF TO HAVE A GVN FLAG DISPLAYED ON EVERY HOUSE IN HIS DISTRICT BY 28 OCTOBER, HE BELIEVES THAT IT MAY BE SOMEWHAT PREMATURE SINCE IT ALLOWS THE VC MORE TIME TO PULL THE FLAGS DOWN. AN ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE TO INSURE THAT ONLY GVN FLAGS ARE DISPLAYED IS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY A SECRET GROUP OF LOYAL GVN CITIZENS WHO WILL MOVE THROUGH ALL THE VILLAGES AND HAMLETS TO NOTE IF THE GVN FLAG IS FLYING. IF NOT, THEY WILL INFORM THE POLICE. THEY WILL ALSO BE ESPECIALLY WATCHFUL FOR ANY NLF FLAGS WHICH MAY APPEAR.

5. FIELD DISSEM: EMBASSY MACV 7TH AIR FORCE AT SAIGON: SENT TO CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF PACFLT PARIS.

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REPORT CLASS S E C R E T

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